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ABSTRACT

Introductory material provided in this document states the mission of the National School Volunteer Program (NSVP), lists background trends related to community/school partnerships in education, and offers reasons for increasing the role of volunteers in schools. Subsequent material provides examples of programs based on cooperation and interaction between business and schools. Programs specifically described include (1) corporate involvement in Houston public schools; (2) a summer intern program for teachers in San Francisco; (3) a business/school partnership for training teachers in Fairfax County, Virginia, to use new technologies; (4) the economic education program of the Pinellas County, Florida, Chamber of Commerce; and (5) vocational training in Maryland public schools. Concluding discussion focuses on the management of a school volunteer program in rural Maine; benefits for businesses, schools, and students; essential conditions for program success; and leadership skills required of corporate volunteer managers. (RH)

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PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION

A STATEMENT PREPARED FOR:

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Submitted by: Sandra T. Gray
Executive Director
National School Volunteer Program

PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION

The mission of the **National School Volunteer Program** is to assist school systems in building effective partnerships with their communities in order to help improve the quality of education. We provide management training and technical assistance to school systems and local communities in the formation or expansion of effective partnerships.

School volunteerism, if one defines the word "volunteeer" as meaning "any resource contributed for which a school system does not pay", encompasses a very wide range of activities, from the tutoring of younger children by older ones, to sophisticated partnerships between school systems and the corporate structures of cities.

There are many observable trends over the last several years which provide important background to the current development of partnerships in education. Some of these trends are:

- Public's declining confidence in the schools to do a good job
- Changes in pupil performance reported by the National Center for Educational Statistics such as: the decline in the average scholastic aptitude test scores of high school seniors; a weakness in high level thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and math and science instruction; and the fact that 13% of all 17-year-olds in the U.S. can be considered functionally illiterate.
- 80% of the people who pay taxes that support our schools, do not have children in school.

- Increasing number of single-parent families, and traditional families with both parents working.
- Fewer teachers are being graduated from college and by 1985 there will be a tremendous teacher shortage in general coupled with the fact that 75% fewer math teachers and 65% fewer science teachers are being trained now than a decade ago.
- As you know, the most rapidly growing occupations in the U.S. involve the use of knowledge of computer technology, while our capacity to teach these skills lags far behind.

- Another trend is the substantial increase in private sector investment in education and training. According to the American Society for Training and Development, Corporations spend $40-$60 billion annually on remediating and training employees. Several companies offer courses in the basics to their employees. Employers and other segments of the community are increasingly aware that they have a stake in the schools and a role to play in improving them. They know, too, that profit is linked directly to the health of the surrounding community. And the health of any community is linked directly to the success of the educational institutions within it.

In his book, **A Place Called School,** John Goodlad suggests that a plan for reducing teaching hours--which he sees as one solution to the loss of creativity and enthusiasm experienced by many teachers--would "move to a higher level of feasibility" if there were increased volunteerism by citizens in schools.

"Such options for both supporting the educational process in schools and strengthening community involvement in educating the young become feasible only when

we allow our minds to escape from the fetters of conventional thinking about our schools," Goodlad says.

Goodlad speaks of bringing in artists, political and business leaders, scientists, doctors, lawyers and the like. "Students, in particular, think this would be a good thing to do...", he says.

We agree. Doctors, lawyers, merchant chiefs, mothers, fathers, grandparents, secretaries, business people, college students, governors -- the list of people , who think it "is a good thing to do" to give voluntary time and effort to schools , is wide and long, and the contribution of volunteers have indeed made feasible many things that could not otherwise have occurred in schools.

EXAMPLES:

Houston's Award Winning Approach:

Any weekday finds corporate America actively engaged as a partner in Houston's public schools.

Tenneco Oil, for example, flies in University of Texas professors weekly to teach a geology course designed at Tenneco expense for students at the High School for Engineering Professions.

IBM provides 15 volunteers each week to tutor students at Hamilton Middle School.

Shell Development conducts workshops for mathematics and science teachers of the gifted to show them what scientists of the future need to learn now.

The American Institute of Architects has an 8-week "Architecture is Fun" program in a dozen schools.

Southwestern Bell provides management technique seminars for school managers. It also briefs the entire senior class at Furr High School on the job skills they will need to compete in Houston's high-tech labor market.

Like many other companies, Rockwell International sends speakers, in its case on aerospace, to acquaint students with their many different career choices.

In all, 66 businesses established or continued partnerships with 63 Houston public schools in 1983. Over 600 business people were involved, contributing their know-how as well as time valued at more than $500,000.

All this activity is part of the Business/Schools Parntership Program coordinated by Volunteers in Public Schools, a department of the Houston Independent School District established back in 1970. The program has become a model for the nation. Some 200 school districts have asked for information on how Houston does it. The Houston model won the National School Volunteer Program's 1983 award as the best volunteer program in the country in the business involvement category. Even the White House Office of Policy Development asked for a report on Houston's winning ways with the business community. So have the Carnegie Foundation, the Kettering Foundation and the Education Commission of the States.

San Francisco's Summer Interns:

Norman Keeve, a science teacher at San Francisco's Galileo High School, spent the summer of 1983 solving problems involving the chemical recycling of solvents at McKesson Corporation's R&D lab.

Patrick Chew, mathematics teacher at John O'Connell High School, was in Southern Pacific's transportation research center, developing algebraic formulae to explain changes in the makeup of railroad traffic.

Anita Jones, mathematics teacher at Francisco Middle School, learned how her subject is used in large corporations, particularly in graphs, at Analytic Services' revenue accounting office.

In all, six San Francisco public school teachers received paid internships in the business community under the Corporate Action in Public Schools Program, one of several volunteer activities of San Francisco School Volunteers, itself a non-profit organization designed to bring schools and community together.

One intern said later that the summer was a real eye-opener! "It's been 30 years since I had a job other than teaching. Now I know what current business tasks are like. I know what qualifications my students need to develop for their future work."

Another said, "How primitive school science programs are!" Corporate managers appeared to agree. One of the most important things to come out of the program so far is an awareness among business leaders that their help is urgently needed to get high-tech equipment and know-how into school science programs.

Some 20 interns are expected to be placed in corporate jobs next summer, an indication that both the business community and school district are pleased with the first year results.

The Corporate Action Program was launched by the mayor, Chamber of Commerce, and School Volunteers way back in 1971, long before the current national emphasis on community involvement in education. It sponsors many activities

other than the internship program. Today, some 40 corporations, many of them "Fortune 400" companies, contribute money, volunteers and the use of their facilities to provide business-related learning experiences for students.

Fairfax County Teachers Join the High-Tech World:

Helping teachers join the high-tech world so they can improve classroom instruction for students is the focus of the business/school partnership in Fairfax County, Va. Since many high-tech companies have settled in this county adjacent to the Nation's Capitol, it was a natural choice. Twenty corporations signed on initially for the Superintendent's Business/Industry Council, formed in late 1982. Teacher training activities are already underway.

AT&T Long Lines includes public school teachers at no cost in its employee training sessions on the use of the PLATO computer-assisted instruction system.

Satellite Business Systems opens its word processing center at night to train business teachers in the use of the latest word processing equipment. Students will join the evening training sessions this year, taught by newly-trained teachers.

And Arthur Anderson invites school staff to join clients and employees in a microcomputer course at its county headquarters.

Meanwhile, teachers and guidance counselors, some 225 in all, have been touring corporate offices and data centers, talking with managers and technicians not only about school applications of the new technologies, but about the potential job market for students in these fields over the next few years. Nor have the social

sciences been forgotten. Foreign languages teachers have been exploring career opportunities for outstanding students in French, Spanish and other languages.

Another initiative of the Business/Industry Council may be one of the first of its kind in the nation. It has created the Fairfax County Public Schools Education Foundation, Inc., as a non-profit tax-exempted entity to accept and administer donations of money, property and services. The Foundation has an impressive goal: To enlist the private sector in a county-wide campaign to improve every aspect of public education.

A New Image for the Dismal Science:

It didn't take a crystal ball for the Pinellas Suncoast Chamber of Commerce to predict the future. Studies showed Florida has the number one economic climate in the country to attract new business. Yet students in Pinellas County public schools, like those elsewhere in the state, knew almost nothing about economics, how the free enterprise system works or how to choose a career. They could hardly offer the skills to attract new business to the Tampa Bay area in the years ahead.

To close the knowledge gap, the Suncoast Chamber went into partnership with the Pinellas County public schools to create an economic education program called "Educational Excellence: A Shared Commitment."

Representing 8,000 businesses, the Chamber could marshall impressive resources. Helping teachers to understand the "dismal science" was an important first step. To do this, the Chamber sponsored an economics course for teachers at the University of South Florida. It recruited local business leaders to teach it, picking

up the tuition costs for teacher participants. So many teachers signed up, there was soon a substantial waiting list.

Next, the Chamber helped to place an economic education resource person in the school system to help teachers develop curriculum materials and teaching aids. It also provided audio and visual equipment for classroom use. In addition, it sponsored an Economics Fair, giving teachers a showcase in which to demonstrate to parents and the community some of their new teaching approaches and materials. The schools in turn began a testing program for pupils to see if the new activities had increased their understanding of economics. It had.

Totaling the contributions of Chamber members in the school year 1982-83 showed 163 volunteers had contributed some 1,500 hours and served 89,000 students.

In January 1984, the Chamber launches a new Career Exchange Opportunity Program. This will give high school juniors and seniors an in-depth look at many careers. The local electric and telephone companies, a drug manufacturer, a large department store and other firms will offer 4-12 week courses covering every aspect of their operations. Companies will provide on-site classroom space, instructors and materials. Later the Chamber will arrange job placement assistance for interested students who complete the courses.

Doing Business in Maryland:

Offered at $75,000, the four-bedroom house for moderate-income residents attracted hundreds of would-be buyers, already aware of the quality construction in the six previous homes put up by the builders. The house had to be sold by lottery.

The construction team with the quality product wasn't a corporate giant. Architects, masons, cabinetmakers, interior designers, landscape gardeners, financial record keepers and publicity agents were all students in Montgomery County, Maryland public schools.

The county provided the building lot. A local bank put up the construction loan. Local architects judged the students' home designs. Local building supply firms donated lumber, concrete and other materials. At the end of the school year, the house sold, the County Board of Realtors presented awards of excellence to the young entrepreneurs.

Since 1977, the Students Construction Trades Foundation has been a successful partnership between Montgomery County business firms and the public schools. It's one of three foundations supported by the business community to give students "hands-on" career experience.

Some 20 automobile dealers participate in the Automotive Trades Foundation, which operates a licensed used-car dealership staffed by 48 students. These young people not only do the engine and body work to prepare cars for resale; they also serve as accountants, sales people and public relations staff. "The training", says John Paul of Paul Brothers Oldsmobile in Bethesda, "gives students a big jump on other 18-year-olds." Whatever the incentive, fully 40 percent of the automotive students go on to college.

"Classic Flowers" is the classy name of the florist shop recently opened in a shopping mall by the Students Retail Trade Foundation. Start-up funds were provided by the Bank of Bethesda. The construction trade students built the free-

standing kiosk to house the shop. Accounting students keep the books. Giant Foods public relations director Barry Scher, a Foundation coordinator for the project, says the shop should gross $200,000 its first year. Profits will probably go toward opening another retail store.

Lawrence Shulman, a Silver Spring real estate attorney, serves as general counsel to all three foundations. He cites perhaps the most important gain. "These projects", he says, "have given students a new interest in their academic studies. They're learning what it takes to make it in the real world."

The Management of a School Volunteer Program in Rural Maine:

There are five school buildings in SAD 58, in the lumbering and ski region of southwestern Maine. There is also a volunteer program with an incisive management style which, because the scale is small and the action up-front, could well serve as a model for managing a volunteer program of any size, anywhere.

Initially, coordinator Vici Robinson -- a part-time employee of the school district -- decided to use her teaching background as a school volunteer. Now, six years later, 116 volunteers work under Vici's direction on a continuing basis, and 170 are included on an occasional duty roster.

There is not a surplus of free time in SAD 58. In the predominantly blue-collar communities which comprise the school district, 75% of the mothers work. Still, most of Vici's volunteers are parents. Their numbers are supplemented by young singles from nearby Sugar Loaf ski resort, and by seniors from the retirement center in Kingfield.

Vici's district is one of 38 members of the Maine School Volunteer Alliance, which recently persuaded the state legislature to authorize a position of state volunteer coordinator in the state department of education.

Because her program is small and her management of it is so personal, Vici may avoid some of the administrative problems that come with size such as decentralization, supervision of staff, or extensive data collection and recordkeeping. The hierarchy of volunteer jobs which Vici keeps in her head is probably in a computer in a larger program, and correspondingly less visible.

Yet another set of problems arises for managers of small programs, including the lack of recognition of their management skills. It is much easier to be impressed with the complexity of a large operation and to credit the skills of the coordinator who pulls together a myriad of details. Harvard's graduate school of business administration offers special courses designed to address the management needs of small businesses.

Harvard Business School ----meet Vici Robinson!

In several cities, Business-School partnerships that emphasize "people resources" rather than financial or other material, "uninvolved" contributions have enlisted large numbers of volunteers in activities jointly planned by committees of business and school representatives -- activities that match school needs and business resources. When business and school coordinators manage these programs systematically, they enhance both the business and the school image in the community while helping to enhance the instructional program.

The opportunities for consistent, lasting, effective volunteer services are dramatically increased when the program is properly planned and managed. A successful volunteer program is not an "add-on" to a school system's curricular and instructional program, but an integrated part of curriculum, staff development, instruction and administration. In many communities, the local chambers provide coordinators to work with the school system manager and the business community.

In April, 1984, the Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce, under the leadership of Fred Ball, is supporting training in the area of school/business partnerships for educational and business leaders in the state of Utah. NSVP will conduct the training, using our manual, **Creating and Managing a Corporate School Volunteer Program.** The Salt Lake City Chamber is looking forward to becoming a model for the nation.

Experience has shown that partnerships are collaborative efforts to achieve mutually agreed goals and objectives by matching corporate resources to identified needs of the school system or individual school.

Successful business-school partnerships are built upon shared respect and trust -- qualities that must be taken for granted and transcend narrow self-interest. They require time, effort and patience to cultivate. Cynthia Shelton, director of Seattle's exemplary Private Initiatives in Public Education, compares business-school partnerships to marriage: "the courting and get-acquainted period, communication blocks and developments, love relationships -- and some disappointments and working out of problems." For Shelton, a crucial element of success is mediation of problems and building on ways that both partners experience clear gains.

Benefits are mutual

Business-school partnerships make sense when viewed from the perspective of corporations:

- Businesses can exercise social responsibility and, in most cases improve their corporate image in the community.

- Businesses can influence ways to get the best possible return on their local education tax dollars in efficiency, productivity, and achievement of goals.
- Business people can establish increased grassroots understanding of their company with school administrators and teachers.
- Business and industry can contribute directly to efforts that may assure a reliable source and continuing supply of well-educated potential employees. The most current emphasis is upon scientific and technical competence required for jobs in the near future.
- Businesses can decrease costs that they must now assume for extra training, recruitment, remediation, accidents and injuries on the job, employee turnover, absenteeism, poor work habits and societal costs of welfare and unemployment.

Schools and students benefit from partnerships by:

- exposure to positive role models;
- better preparation for work through understanding of types of jobs and preparation needed to obtain and hold them;
- improved student aspirations and motivation to prepare for the work world;
- increased self-confidence and skills in job seeking;
- more complete educational background, including the business perspective;
- practical technical education;
- a more realistic image of public schools in the corporate community -- usually much more positive and encouraging;
- better adulthood -- citizenship, and participation in contemporary political and cultural life.

Essential Conditions for Program Success

Corporations and schools must contribute strong top level support for beginning and maintaining a business-school partnership. This commitment must have a legitimacy that should be made explicit in corporate and school system policy documents. Such on-the-record declarations spell out the difference between vague intentions to be helpful and a well-managed corporate school volunteer program. Crucial evidence of commitment to sound management of corporate volunteer efforts is assignment of an individual with access to top decision makers within the school system and within the corporation to be formally responsible for developing the partnership. The corporate representative should be chosen carefully -- using specific criteria of commitment and competence in keeping with the significance of the responsibility.

Do not underestimate the responsibility involved. For a program manager to devote from seven to ten percent of a full-time job to coordination of a school volunteer program is not unreasonable. Large programs may require considerably greater allotments of time. The responsibilities and the estimated time involved should be part of the formal job description of the individual assigned. Moreover, the extent of the commitment should be reviewed periodically so that the program manager does not become over-extended.

Most successful partnerships emphasize and specify the role of people --volunteer employees and retired employees and spouses who share time, energy, talents and expertise that would otherwise be unavailable. Despite the financial strains on public schools, volunteerism is more important than direct contributions of money or material resources and other investments that may not affect the most

critically important targets for service --students and teachers. It is they who make the corporate contribution of human resources most rewarding and long-lasting.

Yet someone within the company must attend to the personal needs of these volunteers on a regular basis -- the program manager must manage personal relationships. It is common for schools and school systems to tell a company that once the volunteers are on board, the schools will take care of the rest -- including all of the recognition activities such as thank-you notes. This tendency is understandable, for the schools are usually very appreciative, they are attentive, and they usually do follow through on their promises. Nevertheless, the volunteers need to know the people in the company know what they are doing and that they care. They need to hear from someone personally -- not simply by being mentioned in an article in the company newsletter. They need to hear a warm voice on the phone or be seen face-to-face.

Strong and expert management is a critical element at each stage of developing and operating corporate school volunteer programs. Goals, objectives and evaluation must link closely with performance expectations. Most importantly, new relationships must be cultivated -- building bridges between private and public sector methods of operation and communicating. As a seasoned coordinator in Oakland, California explained, "Companies talk product; schools talk process. Over time we've learned how to communicate."

Program leadership is a key factor. Whatever the title of the person responsible for the collaborative effort of planning and program development --manager,

director, coordinator -- this person must develop trust and respect among educators, corporate volunteers, and top level executives. It is also essential for the program manager to have access to and support of top management in order to carry out plans and to communicate top level commitment in efforts to enlist volunteers and assure program continuity.

Finally, the corporate volunteer manager must apply four major leadership skills:

1. **Political sensitivity** to mediate among a wide range of people from different worlds of public schools and private corporations --including public school students, school district administrators, building principals, teachers, corporate executives, media and officials of government agencies and unions.

2. **Public relations skills** within and outside of the company, such as presentation methods to describe and promote the program to varied groups; recognition of volunteers in the press, school ceremonies, and personal contact.

3. **Ability to motivate and organize people** to work together in new ways over a period of weeks, months, and perhaps years.

4. **Flexibility** for adapting to new economic and political conditions or changes in corporate priorities, needs and resources by creating new options for volunteers.

The first and most important responsibility is to provide ample time and resources for planning. A common pitfall in program planning and development is that partners rush into program start-up, neglecting to realize the lead time required for creating effective collaboration. The mistake reflects a frequent misunderstanding by corporate managers of the ways that schools and school systems operate -- how they make and carry out decisions very differently from corporations.

Unlike business and industrial firms, schools and school systems are not organized in a hierarchy -- appearances to the contrary. Instead, decisions made at the top level must be confirmed and adapted at lower levels before being implemented. To understand how schools differ from companies, compare schools to villages of cottage industries, with each teacher in charge of a separate personal enterprise. The school principal is extremely important in establishing a climate of general expectations and acting as "gatekeeper" for changes in the school. A few, usually in small elementary schools, are even instructional leaders. However, even a strong principal cannot get much accomplished without the prior support and genuine cooperation of the teachers -- especially when it comes to introducing new people or programs to the school and classroom.

It sometimes takes corporate managers a long time to understand why it can be so difficult to hold task-oriented planning meetings -- meetings that are businesslike, that focus on results and "products" rather than on process. Yet seasoned managers of corporate school volunteers know that if influential school system participants are not fully involved to their satisfaction, they may become adversaries. Creating an essential feeling of full involvement in decision making among the educators can be time-consuming, but in the long run it is most efficient.

We conclude from our review of a range of programs across the country that it is the process of partnership development that must be the focus and expertise of the business program director if the business community is to be involved in educational improvement. Change is a process, not an event.

For more information, training or technical assistance to start or expand your Partnerships in Education program, contact:

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